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UNCLAS HARARE 001729

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT- EDITOR SUES INFORMATION MINISTER;

HARARE

¶1. Geoff Nyarota, Editor-in-Chief of the independent daily "The Daily News," has filed a Z\$6 million lawsuit against Information and Publicity Minister Professor Jonathan Moyo for defamation. Nyarota has also slapped the editor of the government-controlled daily "The Herald," Pikirayi Deketeke, with a similar lawsuit for publishing a defamatory article. Nyarota argues that the article in question, which appeared in the June 7, 2002 edition of The Herald under headline "Moyo files lawsuit against Sikhala, Daily News," is insulting.

¶2. The matter arose after The Daily News first published a story detailing court testimony in which opposition Member of Parliament Job Sikhala alleged that Minister Moyo had a homosexual relationship with former Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Chief Executive Officer, Alum Mpofu. Minister Moyo rebutted the controversial Daily News story in The Herald on June 7. Moyo is quoted in the Herald story saying: "Nyarota is a disgraceful pervert whose indecency and vulgarity has gone too far, all in a morally corrupt crusade to win dubious international media awards." In his papers filed with the High court, Nyarota said that the article suggested that he is an "unprincipled, unscrupulous, and unprofessional man who would do anything to win an award."

SULLIVAN